



Director of
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BRIEFS AND COMMENTS

ISLAMIC CONFERENCE: Move to Expel Egypt

An effort by hardline Arab states to expel Egypt from the Islamic Conference will be the central issue when foreign ministers of the 43-member organization meet in Fez, Morocco, next Tuesday. The results of this effort are likely to affect similar attempts at the meetings of the Organization of African Unity in Monrovia in July and the Nonaligned Movement in Havana in September.

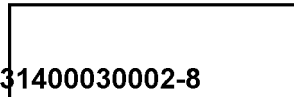
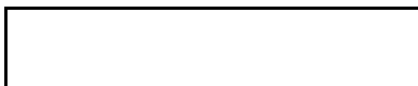
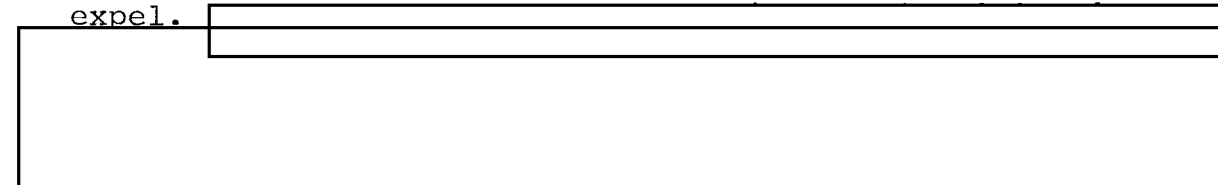
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The prospects for Egypt do not look good. Although the Islamic Conference charter contains no specific provisions for ousting a member, any resolution can be approved by a two-thirds vote. Those supporting Egypt's expulsion constitute at least a simple majority of the organization, and they may simply ignore the two-thirds rule.

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Of the Arab members, only Sudan and Oman can be counted on to support Egypt, but even their support will be limited. The Saudis have indicated that they will not bring up the subject but will vote for a motion to expel.

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ZAIRE - WEST GERMANY: Rocket Test Facility Terminated

Zairian President Mobutu has decided to terminate the contract of the West German firm OTRAG to conduct launch vehicle research and to launch satellites from Zaire. Mobutu's decision, taken last week, was at least partly in response to pressures from the West German Government. Chancellor Schmidt reportedly raised with Mobutu in March West Germany's displeasure with OTRAG's rocket-testing operations. [REDACTED]

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The USSR and East Germany periodically have accused the West Germans of introducing sophisticated weaponry into southern Africa. OTRAG's activities also have hindered the development of West German - Angolan relations, which Bonn believes has benefited East Germany. OTRAG's operations have also complicated the rapprochement between Angola and Zaire and have been a source of concern to other African countries. In addition to putting to rest the suspicions of Zaire's neighbors, the cancellation of OTRAG's rocket testing probably will lead to improved Zairian relations with both West Germany and the USSR.

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YUGOSLAVIA: Political Infighting in Croatia

Sharpening political differences in Croatia may compound confusion at the federal level over implementing such policies as President Tito's proposal to rotate top state and party jobs annually. Internal dissension over Tito's planned visit to Moscow appears to be a central problem in Croatia's current political turmoil.

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//Tito's visit to Moscow later this month evidently does not have the full endorsement of all federal party leaders. The Croat leadership apparently is divided on a number of issues touching on Yugoslavia's relationship with the USSR. Local Croat leaders are trying to mute anti-Soviet remarks in the republic's media.

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The liberals have also hit Stipe Suvar, Croatia's Secretary for Education and leading ideologue. Suvar is the originator of an unpopular educational reform threatening the privileged position of elite families in the university system.

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The federal party normally keeps close tabs on the Croat party in an effort to keep the republic's volatile nationalism in check. Currently, however, Vladimir Bakaric, Zagreb's *eminence grise* is ill, and Tito is pre-occupied with foreign affairs, including his trip to Moscow. Croat party leader Milka Planinc has warned officials in Belgrade that confusion at the federal level is adding to discontent in the republic and that the situation could get worse before it gets better.

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SPECIAL ANALYSIS

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USSR: Crime and the Penal System

//The first major study by CIA of the Soviet penal system since 1972 concludes that crime is a growing problem in the USSR. Probably more than 8 million Soviet citizens are now undergoing some form of penal correction, several times the figure 20 years ago. Some 2.1 million are confined, most of them in the country's 1,100 forced labor camps. Persons convicted of "crimes against the state" receive the harshest punishment; the number of people being punished for such crimes is probably less than 10,000.//

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The most prevalent crimes are hooliganism--a catchall term for socially disruptive behavior--and theft of state property. Alcoholism and heavy drinking are endemic in Soviet society and are blamed for much crime, especially violent crime. Crimes of violence make up perhaps 3 percent of all crime, far less than in the US, but they are rising, as are juvenile crimes. The recidivism rate is apparently high despite the harsh treatment given repeat offenders. The crime rate is higher in urban areas than in the countryside and highest of all in the remote cities of Siberia and the far north where many exconvicts have been encouraged to resettle.

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"Crimes against the state" include treason, terrorism, sabotage, and anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda. The last is an offense with which political dissidents are often charged.

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The Ministry of Internal Affairs is responsible for enforcing the Criminal Code. The MVD's militia (uniformed police) maintains public order and arrests lawbreakers. The Procurator-General and subordinate procurators at each administrative level bring and prosecute charges. The Ministry of Justice runs the court system. Most crimes are tried in local, people's courts, but misdemeanors may be tried in less formal "comrades' courts"

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in social and labor organizations. Criminals are handled swiftly and--most of the time--impartially, under the rather flexible provisions of the Criminal Code. This flexibility does, however, allow Communist Party officials to meddle if they wish. [REDACTED]

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The gamut of legal punishments ranges from public censure and small fines to death by shooting. About half of all sentences involve confinement, and probably more than 90 percent involve forced labor. [REDACTED]

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The Correctional Labor Code is the authority under which the MVD establishes and runs Soviet penal facilities--prisons and forced labor camps. The Code specifies several degrees of harshness for the prisons and labor camps, and indicates the sorts of criminals to be assigned to each. The Code was modified a few years ago to permit courts to sentence large numbers of criminals to forced labor without confinement; such laborers now make a major contribution to Soviet economic development.

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Treatment of Dissidents

After a period of relative tolerance in the early years of the Khrushchev regime, Soviet authorities have been cracking down harder on dissidents in recent years. Even so, the number of dissidents now undergoing penal correction is far smaller than in the Stalin years. Human rights activists seem to be bearing the brunt of official repression, but the refuseniks (persons who have been denied permission to emigrate), religious nonconformists, nationalists, and discontented workers are also subject to prosecution. [REDACTED]

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When the authorities do not wish to prosecute a dissident--either because he has broken no law or because a trial would generate international condemnation--they often resort to police harassment, unreasonable search, and seizure of property. The practice of incarceration in psychiatric institutions is less common now than it was a few years ago, probably because of strong international criticism. [REDACTED]

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The Forced Labor System

25X1 //Probably more than 7 million people are now in the forced labor system. About 2.1 million of them are confined, some 400,000 in prisons and the rest in forced labor camps, while up to 5 million are doing forced labor outside confinement, most at construction sites far from their homes.// [REDACTED]

//There are around 300 prisons, almost always located in cities, and most dating from Tsarist times. Large cities often have several prisons differentiated by function; penitentiaries, transit prisons, investigative prisons, and psychiatric prisons. Prisons in remote cities commonly serve several functions. Prison regimes are harsher than those in forced labor camps.// [REDACTED]

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25X1 There are now around 1,100 forced labor camps, about the same number as in 1972. Since then, however, the number of inmates has risen about 7 percent (approximately pacing the population increase) and now stands at about 1.7 million. There are three basic kinds of forced labor camps: correctional labor colonies, where most adult criminals are sent; educational labor colonies, primarily for juvenile offenders; and colony settlements, the mildest form of camp where the sexes are mixed and where families are encouraged to settle with inmates.

[REDACTED]

The inmates of prisons and the harsher labor colonies live in cells, while inmates of other camps live in barracks-type accommodations. Prisoners are allocated only 2 or 3 square meters of living space. Former inmates have complained that the diet in prisons and forced labor camps is inadequate, that medical treatment is poor, that working conditions are dangerous, that life in confinement damages the spirit and threatens the health, but few prisoners now die while in confinement. [REDACTED]

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25X1 The inmates of prisons and forced labor camps engage in manufacturing, construction (they have built whole cities), production of building materials, logging, agriculture, and mining. [REDACTED]

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In the last 10 years the number of Soviet citizens engaged in forced labor without confinement has grown much more rapidly than the number of those in confinement. Most of the persons involved are on probation or parole from confinement. They are used, mostly as manual laborers, at construction sites all over the country. Commonly, they live in unguarded and only lightly supervised military-style housing compounds; although they must observe a nightly curfew, few other restrictions are placed upon them. [REDACTED]

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All forced laborers are paid at least the Soviet minimum wage for their work, although after deductions for their upkeep as little as 10 percent may remain. No statistics are available, but forced labor doubtless makes an enormous contribution to the Soviet economy. It also provides a mechanism for removing unproductive, disruptive persons from the overcrowded cities of the European USSR, transforming them into productive citizens in remote, undeveloped, but resource-rich regions. [REDACTED]

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